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La Mar

Molly Brown
Collin College

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LA MAR

Molly Brown

My mother died a long time ago—
but she is sitting right there.

When I go to hug her and embrace,
When I go to her for comfort—
her torso sluggishly tears away like rotting wood
while she clings to me.

A sea of tears rushes out from beneath a scrimshawed ribcage,
fraught with cast-off netting
and love-notes in scratched, plastic bottles.

There is a memory
Of gentle hands in drab hospital rooms
where my mother strokes my hair—
her words are soft, and I am not alone.

Then the whole apartment fills with the cold, dark water—lit green from below
by the dying *Titanic*.

From above, I can see perfect, miniature whales floating in the foamy crest—
they roll and show their once white bellies,
now marred with brutal red spears named *Joseph, Stephen, and Molly*.

I want to swim,
I want to *live*—
I want the woman in the white hospital gown
Who sings into my hair about how our mothers
became the first dolphins out of GOD's jealousy.

Her fingers dig red marks in me—she whispers
with a hiss like waves that grows to a roar,
echoing thunder everywhere:

"I love you
more than anyone else **ever** will."